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Good morning . My name is Bonita Griffin. I am here to speak in ~~favor~~ of Senate Bill 840. I am a resident of New Haven and a graduate of Christian Community Action's PEP program and a member of Mothers for Justice. PEP stands for People Empowering People and I would like to testify on behalf of PEP and others programs such as Parent Leadership Training Institute.. Our communities need programs like this to help parents strengthen our parenting skills, to help people become more familiar with themselves to recognize our strengths and weaknesses. They taught me to advocate for my community through these programs. I have learned who my alderman are and how to contact state legislators. I have been given opportunities to speak face to face with my elected representative. I have become an active member of my community as a result of my participation in these programs. I don't think I would have the courage, nor the knowledge to be here before you, to inform you of the great importance this funding for these programs are. There are too many of us, that are uninformed, miseducated are the issues that hit home, especially in the poor neighborhoods. We must build up our communities and these programs which allow me and others like me to learn how to go about doing just that. You need our communities to maintain your seats and we need funds for these programs to teach the people that every vote counts. Thank you for your time.